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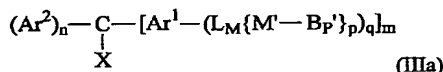
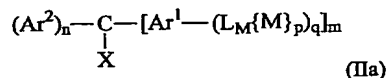
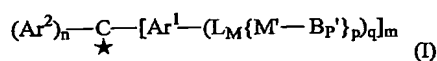
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(57) Abstract: The present invention provides a method of forming an ion of formula (I) comprising the steps of: (i) reacting a compound of the formula (IIa); with a biopolymer, Bp, having at least one group capable of reacting with M to form a covalent linkage, to provide a biopolymer derivative of the formula (IIIa); and (ii) cleaving the C-X bond between X and the α-carbon atom of the derivative of formula (IIIa) to form the ion of formula (I); where: C* is a carbon atom bearing a single positive charge or a single negative charge; and X is a group capable of being cleaved from the α-carbon atom to form an ion of formula (I). The biopolymer derivatives of the invention have enhanced ionisability with respect to free biopolymer (Bp) enabling improved analysis of the biopolymer using mass spectrometry.